



UNITED NATIONS
OFFICE OF LEGAL AFFAIRS

Opening of the 22^d session of the Assembly of State Parties to the Rome
Statute of the International Criminal Court

Keynote address

by

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4 December 2023, New York, NY

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am pleased to be with you today on this occasion, and to deliver this keynote address on behalf of the Secretary General.



At this moment, I feel tempted to fall back on the history of what brought us here.

Excellencies,

Distinguished delegates,

Twenty-five years ago, on the 17th of July 1998, around midnight, in the main conference room of the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) in Rome,

In the presence of delegates from around the world; corridors crowded with diplomats, ministers, legal experts, UN staff, NGOs, and media representatives,

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The establishment of the Court was the apex of a long process, that started at Nuremberg and Tokyo, and developed by ad hoc tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda.

The United Nations was the forum for the preparatory work of the Rome Conference. Initially through the International Law Commission, and subsequently through bodies convened by the General Assembly

Negotiations contained extremely complicated legal issues and concepts, that required the support of an objective body of expertise, which the United Nations provided through its Office of Legal Affairs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This Court is established as a challenge to impunity. It is created to stand impartial and indifferent to status.

It is then to be expected that the Court may come under attack; its authority may be challenged; and its operations may be targeted.

At these moments, the Court must stand firm and uphold its authority.







We have been engaged in concluding supplementary cooperation agreements between the Court and numerous United Nations bodies, in line with the Relationship Agreement, to expedite and streamline our support to the Court.

Senior officials of United Nations entities, including myself, are in a continuous dialogue with the Court's principals to reinforce existing realms of cooperation.

That's only a glimpse of our support to the Court. Its full scale is impossible to measure or quantify; most of which has been taking place outside the public limelight, for almost two decades.

We have been putting in these many hours of hard work out of a strong belief that justice is not automatic. Justice is a result of action.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have achievements. But we have grave challenges.

As we see, conflicts continue to rage, where violence begets further violence, and each slaughter is the parent of the next.

Men, women, and children no different than us; with names, faces, and many joyful life events ahead of them; are dying, displaced, and living in fear.

Their graveyards display unspeakable brutality. Their demolished homes reveal our capacity for unmatched destruction.





The strength of the Court depends heavily on the support it gets from you, the States Parties.

Challenges are immense and expectations are high.

I hope one day we can tell our children a different story; one that speaks about the cause of humanity; one that makes wars less likely and impunity less acceptable.

Thank you.

